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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.



HINTS ON DRAWING IN CHARCOAL AND CHALK.

BY EMMA HAYWOOD.

DRAWING in charcoal is a rapid and delightful method of transmitting one's ideas to paper, and should certainly be in constant use by the student in order to gain facility in giving expression on paper to any object that may attract his notice from an artistic point of view. The use of charcoal commends itself in many ways, apart from rapidity of working. It is inexpensive, clean, easy to manipulate, and tends to give freedom to the touch. Vine charcoal is undoubtedly the best. It is clear, even, and free from grit; it should always be cut to a sharp edge in the shape of a chisel; by this means you save much waste, and can draw the very finest and clearest lines without being obliged continually to have recourse to the pen-knife.

An inexpensive paper, known as Michelet paper, of French manufacture, is best suited for this kind of work. It takes the charcoal easily for outline only, and should you wish to shade, it has a grain that gives a stippled effect when the charcoal is well rubbed in with the thumb.

For students to draw a model from several points of view in outline only, clear and well defined, where every stroke must have a meaning, whether to delineate a fold or give expression to a face, is far better practice, as a rule, than to laboriously finish up highly shaded studies. Such studies are undoubtedly necessary for the acquirement of technique, but this should come after facility in drawing, and to make frequent drawings in outline is the quickest method of attaining that facility which alone can give strength and decision to any work of art, whether it be a mere sketch or a finished picture.

Such practice will be found of the greatest service to an advanced student, when he finds before him a living model posed in a position difficult to keep for any length of time, he will be able rapidly to catch the action and spirit of the pose while the sitter is fresh, and if certain of his powers as a draughtsman, will have little need to make any radical alterations at subsequent sittings, his study will likewise bear the impress of life and vitality, impossible to portray when working from a model whose muscles are relaxed from fatigue.

One great fault noticeable in students first beginning to work from the life is that they are constantly altering their outline to try and represent the model as they see him at the moment, instead of grasping the spirit of the pose, and using the sitter only as a means of perfecting their first and probably their best impression of him. A living being can never take up exactly the same position twice, neither can you rearrange drapery to fall in the very same folds.

For practice in outline, then, I would recommend the following plan: Provide yourself with good charcoal, Michelet paper, a piece of washleather, and some moderately stale bread. Pin the paper out as evenly as possible on a drawing board with plenty of thumb tacks. Take up your position at least as far away from the model as three times his height, and sketch in as quickly as possible without reference to detail the whole figure, frequently testing your chief points to see that you are fairly correct. Block this outline in as squarely as possible, being careful to give expression to the play of the muscles in their proper places. To do this with the necessary assurance, it is indispensable to have some knowledge of anatomy; such knowledge is power indeed to those who are serious enough in their studies to endeavor to acquire it.

A rough outline sketched, which must of course be corrected until you are satisfied that you can do no better, proceed next to clean it up. First beat out with the washleather the outline made until only a faint impression remains, then with a sharp chisel edged piece of charcoal, go over it with a clear touch, adding all the little delicacies of detail, that it would be waste of time to put



A STUDY OF LILIES FOR EMBROIDERY OR PAINTING, BY HARRY A. DEANE.

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in at starting; don't forget that you are depending on outline only for all expression, and do not put one more touch than is actually needed to give character to the work. There must be no smears, your lines must be clean cut everywhere.

You will find the bread useful here. Roll a small piece between your thumb and forefinger till you bring it to a point, and with this you can eradicate all signs of corrections and alterations. Now by way of varying your course of study, when you have made one or two outline sketches of the model about two feet in height, to draw them much smaller is not nearly so improving, you can next make a life size study of the head only and shade it. To do this use the same paper, and draw a careful outline as before directed; when satisfied with this, clean it up and block in the shadows; with the point worn down put in broad, firm lines, then rub them in with the thumb or fingers, softening off at the edges into the half tones and lightest parts; the marking of the features must of course be put in with the point.

The hair can be blocked in the same way as the face, the high lights in both being taken out with bread. If this manner of shading be dexterously done it takes but little time, and gives a marvellously finished effect, viewed from a short distance. Work done in charcoal must be fixed when finished, as it rubs very easily. To fix with a spray producer is certainly the best plan, and fixatives for this purpose can be procured at almost any store for artists' materials. You can, however, make a fixative for yourself if you have a mind to economize. Do this by dissolving some gum resin in alcohol. Be careful always after using to clean the spray producer by blowing through it a little pure alcohol only. Should it get choked at any time soak it for a while in alcohol, which will thoroughly cleanse it, but bear in mind that prevention is better than cure, and much less trouble.

Finished studies in chalk, whether stumped or worked with the point, should certainly engage some part of an advanced student's time, and form the best preparation possible for studies to follow in painting; for the actual art of coloring, whether in water colors or oils, is easily acquired by those who bring to bear a thorough appreciation of the relative values of light and shade, and in no way can this be so readily learned as by diligently working in black and white; not only tone, but technique follows in the track of such study.

For chalk work Whatman's hand made paper is preferable to any other, such as is used for water color painting when a fine surface is needed. This should be properly stretched, not pinned only on to a board. Make some very strong paste, to which add a little glue or size. First turn up the edges of your paper all round about half an inch, then wet the paper on both sides, run a brush filled with paste along the edge turned up, then paste it down carefully on the board so that every part sticks properly. Let the board lie flat till the paper is dry, when you will have a firm, even surface to draw on, for the paper expanded by moisture will contract again when dry, and so be stretched.

Thin paper must not be made so wet as thick paper, which can be soaked, or possibly in drying it will crack. Now make your first outline in charcoal, then when corrected go over it with a very fine pointed crayon and dust out the charcoal with the washleather.

Coute's chalks are the best and No. 2 the most useful size, but No. 1 for fine lines and No. 3 for the darkest parts are useful. These are required for drawing with the point only. For stumping provide yourself with Coute's powdered chalk, sold in glass tubes and No. 2 crayon for finishing up sharp markings in the features.

Commence with firm, broad lines, afterwards fill in with finer ones, and continue this treatment to any degree of finish you please, being careful that all the while you are adding to the beauty of your drawing by careful modeling; use bread to correct mistakes and take out high lights.

For stumping, which gives flesh texture much better than the point, commence by laying in the broad shadows with a paper stump first dipped into some powdered chalk spread on a piece of washleather. Next put in your half tones in the same way, also the marking of the face. In fact paint with the stump, as it were, using the sweeping movement of a brush. Paper stumps are far preferable to any others, and for dark parts one well worn down is most workable.

For modeling a stumped head bread is invaluable; it is a good plan to dip a piece in water, then knead it together with a piece that has not been moistened; by this means you can roll small fragments to a sharp point and take out delicate lights with the greatest ease; the bread should not be very stale, because in this case it crumbles too much. Stumping in chalk is very fascinating work, and can be carried to a great state of perfection; some finish a little at the last with fine pointed crayon; this is permissible, but not really necessary. I should not advise the use of any fixative for finished chalk drawings, especially when stumped, they lose so much of their freshness and delicacy in the process, and they do not like charcoal smear with the least touch so as to render fixing a necessity.



PANEL OR DOOR STILE, BY HARRY A. DEANE, NEW YORK.